DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIETY
Volume 36 Number 1, June 2007, pp. 129~151

THE CRISIS OF ASIAN GLOBALIZATION: TOWARD A SENISM OF THE LEFT

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Asian Crisis put globalization on trial, and helped to put politics back into development discourse. Not since the glory days of Third Worldism had politics held the developmental spotlight. This restoration owed much to Amartya Sen, whose work not only re-politicizes development discourse, but does so from within the inner sanctum of the world system. Though Senism is not ordinarily associated with radical critique, its egalitarian focus is loaded with oppositional content. It follows from Sen's axiom of "concurrence," as we term it, that democratization is central at all stages of development. In his view the Asian Crisis confirmed the high cost of undemocratic governance. While Asian exceptionalists hold that liberal democracy is not needed on the Rim, and indeed would be a hindrance, Sen foregrounds the instrumental as well as intrinsic value of the freedom factor in all real development. His outlook, moreover, is deeply rooted in Asian axiology. In lieu of the statist economism that monopolized the term "Asian values" during the "miracle" years, Sen proposes an "Eastern strategy" that draws on the deeper and more humane traditions of Asia. From this vantage it is obvious that development reaches far beyond the GDPism that dominates the standard discourse of growth. What has passed for development in much of Asia is mere profit-taking, and when the social and ecological costs of that taking are weighed in the balance, the result is often a net loss. Sen's focus on human capabilities points toward more sustainable development, but also collides with current power structures in the East and West alike. Senism, in short, is inherently oppositional, and can better serve the Left that the Right.

Key Words: *Senism, Asian Crisis, Asian globalization, Asian democratization, reactionary globalization*

INTRODUCTION: THE RE-POLITICIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT

One of the central pillars of Cold War international relations was the solicitude shown by the world's most "liberal" capitalism for the most illiberal capitalism of the time, that of the Asian tigers. There is no sufficient economic explanation for this American support system. Being

primarily a product of power politics, it lasted so long as the Pacific Rim was needed as a vital geopolitical buffer. The Soviet fall cleared the way for full-thrust economic globalization on Washington's terms.

It was not immediately apparent how onerous those terms would be. At first, post-Cold War foreign investment and financial speculation stoked what looked like a new super-miracle on the Rim. Few took serious notice of how the lending binge of the mid-1990s recklessly expanded foreign debt relative to reserves. When the bubble finally broke in 1997, massive capital exodus sent the region into a ruinous plunge. The IMF took its time responding, and finally applied a "rescue" formula that quite predictably (after many hard lessons, such as the Mexican Tequila Crisis of 1994-95) turned the Asian Crash into the Asian Crisis, effectively converting a recession into a depression. To add insult to injury, the globalist fire sale that followed was broadly self-described as economic therapy rather than the socioeconomic pillage that it was.

This protracted Crisis put globalization on trial, but more specifically it put politics back into development discourse. Not since the glory days of Third Worldism had politics held the developmental spotlight (Colburn, 2006). The direction this restoration took owed much to Amartya Sen, who not only re-politicized development discourse, but did so from within the inner sanctum of the world system. Though Senism is not ordinarily associated with radical critique, its egalitarian focus is loaded with oppositional portent. It follows from Sen's axiom of "concurrence," as we term it (See S.H. Thornton, 2004: 32), that democratization is central at all stages of development. In his view the Asian Crisis confirmed the high cost of undemocratic governance. While Asian exceptionalists hold that liberal democracy is not needed on the Rim, and indeed would be a hindrance, Sen (1999: 37) foregrounds the instrumental as well as intrinsic value of the freedom factor in all real development. His outlook, moreover, is deeply rooted in Asian axiology. In lieu of the statist economism that monopolized the term "Asian values" during the "miracle" years, Sen proposes an "Eastern strategy" that draws on the deeper and more humane traditions of Asia.

From this vantage it is obvious that development reaches far beyond the GDPism that dominates the standard discourse of growth. What has passed for development in much of Asia is mere profit-taking, and when the social and ecological costs of that taking are weighed in the balance, the result is often a net loss. Sen's focus on human capabilities points toward more sustainable development, but also collides with

current power structures in the East and West alike. In short, despite Sen's reluctance to face the fact, his work is inherently oppositional, especially on the Eastern side. His critique of Singaporean "Asian values" has been incisive, yet he stops short where neoliberalism is concerned. Thus his work has been far better at dealing critically with the "Asian miracle" than with the inroads of neoliberal globalization after the Asian Crash.

In fact, both "Asian values" and neoliberalism lost credibility in the post-miracle years. By the mid-1990s the specter of cultural anarchy haunted much of the developing world, with the conspicuous exception of the Rim. By eliminating that exception, the Crash and subsequent Crisis put the socioeconomic efficacy of the whole capitalist system on trial. Stricken countries reacted to the Crash according to their very different cultural and political contours. One thing they shared, however, was the undertow effect of Washington-directed globalization.

At this of all times their autonomous modes of development and social security were gutted. Structural adjustment conditions attached to international loans all but precluded Keynesian recovery procedures, while IMF and World Bank recovery schemes bailed out the financiers who had been most responsible for the Crash. The moral hazard this entailed was not the worst of it. These programs also constituted a bailout of pre-Crash power structures that had lost their economic foundations. In a complete inversion of reality, this reactionary "recovery" operation was hailed by neoliberal pundits, such as the swaggering globalist Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*, as a factory for democratization.

Many believe the Asian "miracle," now fully globalized, is back on track, relegating the Asian Crisis to history. But for broad sectors of the working classes the social and cultural meltdown of the Crisis never ended. The elemental security that workers once knew is still melting away, though this hardly registers on the radar screen of our mainstream media. We are assured that the Rim has more than recovered from its little setback of 1997. Even where that is patently not the case — where, for example, thousands of children still dig in garbage pits for their daily bread — the problem is attributed to insufficient neoliberal restructuration. Stellar "reform" cases such as Korea and Thailand are contrasted with relative laggards such as Indonesia and the Philippines.

This dichotomy holds up only insofar as lower class privation in those flagship states has gone unreported. Even in Japan — long famous

for its relative egalitarianism — the divisive impact of neoliberal restructuration is only now becoming a hot political issue "Rising Sun," 2006). The norm throughout Asia, however, is an almost exclusive focus on the profits that are once more rolling in for those who really count in globalized economies. For them post-Crash Asia is better than ever, as the working classes have been put in line, and democracy put on ice.

As more and more Asian leaders join the transnational capitalist class (TCC), the typical Asian state is transformed into a globalist instrumentality (See Herrera, 2006). Those citizens who do not enjoy TCC status, and have yet to reap any benefit from the "Asian miracle," are effectively rendered stateless. For these invisible people the pro forma voting rituals that pass for Asian democracy are almost meaningless. Senism attempts to rectify that, but very timidly. It is, we hold, a necessary but insufficient first step toward the repatriation of this "other Asia." Sen gives democracy some symbolic teeth, but no real fangs.

Crucially, however, he regards democracy as a prerequisite rather than consequence of development. This "concurrence model" integrates economic and political goals at all stages of development. That is a start, but there is still the danger that democratization could end up legitimizing the extant power elite. How can we be sure that the outcome will not be another case of democratic minimalism? Developmental "concurrence," we suggest, must be coupled with the kind of active resistance that Sen's own politics eschews. It is well to march to Sen's drummer, including his post-Western view of democratization, so long as we register the fact that he has paid scant attention to the TNCs that monopolize today's global economy (Herrera, 2006). Nor can we fail to note his neglect (until quite recently) of vital issues of environmental and cultural sustainability. In short, the Senian model is very much an unfinished product, and at some point must be liberated from Sen's own politics.

It is this more radical Senism that should be applied to the question of Asian maldevelopment. In many Rim countries a crossroads was reached with the capitalist "setback" of 1997. For all its social trauma, the Crash did have a silver lining: the enormous emancipatory potential of "unguided" political reformism. Globalization worked against that potential by seizing control of the post-Crash "reform" process. Equating development with pure economism, it snuffed out the grassroots democracy that the Crash had unleashed. The signature feature of globalist "reform" was what it did not include. While new deals were

struck with domestic power elites, the broader issues of political development were jettisoned.

Globalization should be put on trial for two developmental crimes: first, for funding many of the region's most oppressive regimes during the miracle years, and second, for thwarting the democratic resistance that the Crash unleashed. Walden Bello was right to dub the Crash and its aftermath the "Stalingrad" of prevailing globalization. Never was there a greater need for an international community of conscience rather than capital. Sending in the IMF was like sending the fox to save the chickens.

The carpetbagger mentality that the IMF exhibited in that dark hour sent a strong cautionary message to Asians about Washington-directed globalization. The most vocal remonstrance came from Malaysia's Mahathir, who upbraided the IMF and financial speculators such as George Soros. At first Thailand was the model of globalist cooperation, but eventually it too recoiled from IMF dictates. Under Thaksin it pointedly paid back its rescue loans early, symbolically declaring its economic independence. The last Rim nation to pay off its emergency loans was Indonesia. By deciding to pay back its $7.8 billion outstanding debt four years before the 2010 due date, Jakarta will save $200 million in interest. But, like Thailand, its primary purpose is to free itself from Washington's neoliberal grip ("Indonesia," 2006).

This same geoeconomic rebound is a factor in the growing tendency to exclude Washington from regional meetings such as the East Asian Summit of December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur. One should not assume, however, that this blow to US hegemony signals a categorical retreat from globalization, for new modes of globalist maldevelopment are waiting in the wings. The Senian model is at best a weak player in this new Asian drama.

KOREAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIZATION: A GOOD IDEA WHILE IT LASTED

Consider the case of South Korea, where all the ingredients for Senian success seemed to be in place by the early 1990s. This serves warning that democracy cannot rest content with material goals alone. To do so will over time (in this case a very short time) hollow democracy out to the point that even material growth is at risk from government corruption and unaccountability. What looms large here is the challenge of sustaining, not just launching, democratic development. For one brief

moment Korea nearly met our "concurrence" criteria of economic and political simultaneity for sustainable development. What went wrong?

Long before the Crash, Korean development had slipped into a shallow consumerist ethos that tipped the balance of concurrence toward pure economism. The formal apparatus of democracy continued to function, but served mainly as a legitimating device for a new set of power elites. With the generals out of the Blue House, the competition now centered on the question of which civilians would take their place, and in whose interest.

In large part this was a question of funding, and after the Crash the major source of funds would be recovery loans from the IMF. Domestic corporatists were pleased to play along, not only because the IMF was bailing them out, but equally because it mandated anti-labor policies which they were delighted to implement. Now, as they blended into TCC ranks, Korean corporatists began a sweeping rollback of the gains that the working classes had made in the later "miracle" years. To call this a "full recovery" requires a social conscience somewhere between Hayek and A. Rand.

The impact of globalization on Korean democratization cannot be brought into focus until we get past two common misperceptions: 1) that the Korean democratic breakthrough of the late 1980s was the simple product of the economic "miracle," and 2) that the "miracle" itself was the product of a faithfully applied Japan model. Much as classic modernization theory applied a one-size-fits-all model of development to the entire Third World, the Pacific Rim possessed its own one-size model whereby NICs were expected to fly in line with the Japanese "lead goose." To casual observers it seemed that Korea, first among the geese, was doing exactly that. Nothing could be farther from the truth. At every stage Korea's capitalist development was conditioned by its unique political culture, including a strike-prone oppositionalism that could not be farther removed from the authoritarianism of Singapore-school "Asian values." This working class recalcitrance all but compelled the overt repression that distinguished Korea's Parkian development model from Japan's more subtle mechanisms of control.

So too, Korean democratization was marked by a grassroots dynamism that was nowhere to be seen in "miracle" era Japan. Amartya Sen's generic principle of democratic development neglects this sui generis factor, especially where political resistance is concerned. Although Sen is less prone than most European Third Wayers to reduce

democracy to parliamentary terms, his approach still misses the subversive element that sparked Korea's democratic takeoff. That oppositionalism had survived years of real repression, only to wither away in the early 1990s as public interest shifted from street demonstrations to sports events and the latest bargains in department stores.

This apolitical turn set the stage for the more pronounced de-radicalization of a presumed "reform" administration after the Crash. The very word "reform" was restructured as the country surrendered to the strictures of IMFism. There were street protests, of course, but they had more of a pressure-release than a subversive quality. Their major effect was to divert public wrath from Korea's nascent TCC establishment to the foreign devil, the IMF, which was conveniently immune to democratic resistance. Not having to stand for elections, it did what it does best: measuring progress on the scale of profits over people.

Tellingly, the thrust of Kim Dae Jung's "reform" was toward even stronger ties between government and corporate enterprise ("Declaration," 2001). Companies that had long dreamed of shedding the excess baggage of workers' employment entitlements would now get their wish, with full government approval, while their extravagant borrowing habits — with debt ratios often reaching 350 percent — were tacitly pardoned (See "WSSD," 2002). Fueled by corruption and cronyism, total external debt had mushroomed in the 1990s. But those same defects had prevailed throughout the "miracle" years when the Asian system was praised as the rising star of global capitalism. It was financial liberalization, rather, that precipitated the Korean Crash by reducing the relative power of the Blue House, the one brake that had always constrained Korean corporatism (Johnson, 1982; Henderson, 1968).[1]

Thus the social democratization that Korea initiated in the late 1980s was all but extinguished by the commercialism that followed. Corporations emerged as the real victors in Korea's "democratic" revolution. The Crash of 1997 simply entrenched this cultural transformation.[2] Here there would be no flood of grassroots political

[1] The Japanese system, by contrast, had depended upon the less statist mechanism of MITI to accomplish this function. See Johnson concerning MITI; and see Henderson concerning the Korean Blue House.

[2] On the brighter side, this general passivity in the sphere of Korean mainstream politics was partially offset by a qualitative gain on the political periphery: the growth of a full-fledged postmaterial ethos within Korea's NGOs. Given the country's extensive

reform, as in Indonesia and Thailand. Korea's political inertia of the late 1990s was closer to that of the Philippines, but for very different reasons.

INERTIA AS USUAL: THE FALL OF PHILIPPINE PEOPLE POWER

Having barely participated in the "Asian miracle," the Philippines did not have so far to fall in 1997. Its before-and-after transformation was blunted, moreover, by the fact that it had "been there before." Full-thrust globalization had been a big factor in the restoration of "booty capitalism" in the post-Marcos years (Bowie and Unger, 1997: 100), albeit with greater international access to the booty. Hence globalist "reform" had a decade-long head start here. Corazon Aquino's rising dependence on US-directed globalization, still in its late Cold War infancy, pushed her away from "people power" and into the waiting arms of old power structures (Thompson, 1992: 52-53). This outraged the Left, making peace with the National Democratic Front (NDF) impossible.

The administration had little choice but to re-embrace the military, which did not hesitate to turn its newfound powers against human rights activists and NGOs as well as NDF insurgents (Clark, 1998: 82). Aquino was too busy trying to satisfy Washington's agenda for economic liberalization to give much thought to the promises she had made her supporters. The consternation many felt toward her US tilt gave nationalist elites a new base of mass support. Thus she found herself at the crossroads of nationalist versus internationalist interests. More successful Asian "miracle" economies could avoid this fateful choice until the Asian Crash forced it on them, but Aquino got to that juncture a decade before, and ended up a more obliging US puppet than Marcos ever was.

The combined force of populist and Old Guard nationalism brought promises of change in the 1992 elections. It was not long, however, before Fidel Ramos also forgot his campaign pledges and pushed for trade liberalization. The pattern established here, at a time when other Asian NICs were still resisting globalist restructuring with all their

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internet development, these minority voices offer a kernel of hope not only for Korea, but for Asian developmentalism. While mainstream globalist institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO are more the problem than the solution, INGOs (international NGOs) are there to remind us that other modes of globalization are possible.

economic might, would be replicated throughout the region after the Crash. No Asian NIC accepted neoliberal principles willingly. The Philippines took this turn earlier than its more affluent neighbors because it saw no way around it. The paradox is that its two-decade economic slump made it the lead goose in terms of globalization, which is to say neo-colonization.

Taking this globalist "reform" path pushed the Philippine small-farm sector even deeper into recession or outright destitution, thus laying the foundation for another generation of militant resistance. When this rural insurgency happened to be Muslim, it could easily be tagged terrorism, but its real source was still government corruption and ineptitude. The Crash did nothing to correct that. Having suffered far less capital exodus than the top Asian "tigers" would, the Philippine power structure was unfortunately not exploded by the Crash.

NEO-COLONIAL INDONESIA

Indonesia would be more fortunate in that respect, but ingrained habits have proven much harder to remove than a dictator. As in Singapore, economic dynamism had long been used by Suharto's Golkar regime as its stamp of legitimacy. Nonetheless the country's reformist tradition was so deeply rooted that extreme measures were necessary to keep it in line. These bore testimony not to the Golkar Party's hegemonic strength, but to its weakness. Real hegemony, as Antonio Gramsci understood it, would not require such flagrant domination.

To attract foreign investment it was necessary for Jakarta to create the illusion of national stability, which required that repressive mechanisms be kept out of view. With the ghost of Marcos' ouster in the Philippines hanging over all Rim regimes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the image had to be projected that the government could offer investors a reasonable degree of systemic reliability. Marcos had gone too far in flaunting his cronyism and nepotism. Golkar cronyism was of course no secret, but Suharto employed a phalanx of Western-trained technocrats to paper over the arbitrary nature of his rule.

Unlike Thailand, where the problem was chronic indecision, Indonesia's power structure was strong on decisive action but weak on the predictability that investors demanded (MacIntyre, 1999: 144). It was this chronic uncertainty that finally, a full decade after the fall of Marcos, convinced the international community that Suharto also must

go. Since international support had sustained Suharto's New Order after its bloody rise to power, the removal of that exogenous crutch doomed the regime's inner circle, if not the Golkar Party as such. Not even Suharto's technocrats could save him at that point.

Political reform would obviously have to issue from within Indonesia itself, its major source being the country's unique tradition of civil Islam. Suharto had done everything within his power to repress Islamism (political Islam) or, failing that, to co-opt it. For decades reform energies had simmered within the Muslim community. The Crash of 1997 broke the hegemony that had locked those energies outside the political process. Here, far more than in Korea or the Philippines, the Crash constituted an unprecedented political opportunity (See S.H. Thornton, 2006).

US engagement could have brought these hopes to full fruition, but, as in the Philippines long before, neoliberal globalization threw its weight on the opposite side of the scales. This reactionary pressure was redoubled after 9/11, with the "war on terrorism" used as an excuse to restore military as well as economic assistance to the Jakarta regime. The most resistant anti-Jakarta zone, Aceh, held out until the tsunami of December 2004 took it out of action. After that the most active resistance has been from West Papua, where a virtual civil war continues. Unfortunately the natural resources of this area ensure that Washington and the international community will all the more side with Jakarta's militarists.

Nowhere is globalization more nakedly exposed as a neo-colonial force. The recent death of the country's leading dissident writer, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, seems emblematic of the demise of the resistance he pushed for all his life, much of which was spent in the Indonesian equivalent of the Soviet Gulag. While academic "postmodernists" drone on about cultural difference, there is little interest shown in the actual fighting fronts of difference, such as Aceh and West Papua. This is especially the case after 9/11, when Islamist resistance can so easily be cast as terrorism. Under this guise the newly "reformed" Jakarta is emerging as an even more potent colonial force than the New Order was under Suharto.

REACTIONARY GLOBALIZATION

Like Russia's Putin, Thailand's Thaksin contested one side of globalization: the inadequate spoils allocated to his domestic cronies.

Under the flag of a new nationalism these domestic elites set a ghastly precedent for the whole developing world by turning the legitimating device of democracy against democratic freedom. The result, in Thaksin's case, was a virulent new strain of the East Asian security state. This was the antithesis of the hopes raised by post-Crash reformism, as capsulated in the new Thai constitution. The contest of two Asianisms, Sen's democratic development and Thaksin's corporate authoritarianism, harbingers the mounting global struggle between development with or without freedom. Sadly, the neoliberal politics of globalization favors the latter. This deliberalization is carried out in the name of security imperatives, but the ones calling the shots are precisely those who stand to profit by greater insecurity, which inspires public surrender to authoritarianism.

Those who think Thaksinocracy is history just because the tycoon's personal rule has ended should remember the reformist expectations that attended the exits of Marcos and Suharto. What distinguished Thaksin's political machine from theirs was his greater globalist connectivity. Contrary to neoliberal preachment, that is not a politically liberatory bond. Its true face was revealed years before in the globalist tilt that Aquino gave the Philippine model. And it is on even more graphic display in post-Tiananmen China, which Thaksin certainly took note of in constructing his model of de-liberalized globalism. Unbeknownst to most power brokers in Washington, these regional hybrids have already supplanted neoliberalism as the cutting edge of Asian power economics.

Thaksin and other post-Crash authoritarians are mindful of the fact that even the worst abuses of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) have met no serious criticism from neoliberal quarters. Indeed, the arch-globalist Jeffrey Sachs now sings the praises of the unreformed Chinese system as a model for Third World development. Breaking with the democratic teleology that neoliberals have clung to since the late 1980s, Sachs joins Hu Jintao in spurning charity and human rights in favor of unqualified national and personal self-interest. Pollution, exploitation, and a complete dearth of democracy are accepted as price tags of progress: "It's ugly, but — in terms of incomes — it works," Sachs (2006) gushes. He especially recommends the China model for Latin America, which he posits as a foil for comparison with East Asian dynamism.

The chasm between the two outcomes, he avers, is due to the Asian embrace of globalization (Sachs, 2003). In fact it has much to do with

Asian statism, on the one hand, and the early surrender of most Latin nations to neoliberal restructuring, on the other. Ironically Sachs himself helped to frame the terms for that surrender, just as he now is framing the terms of an even more invasive globalization. Meanwhile, in his capacity as special advisor to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, he has promoted Sino-globalism as the model for African development as well ("UN," 2006). In short, he increasingly looks to Sino-globalism as a one-size-fits-all remedy for global poverty.

The American public, likewise, shows scant concern about the things this growth-at-all-cost model forfeits. When it comes to a choice between human rights and "everyday low prices" at Wal-Mart, Hu Jintao knows as well as Sachs does how little he has to fear from ordinary Americans. The only question is whether the geoeconomic center will hold in China itself. Much depends on investor confidence. There may still be hope for a Chinese century if the CCP can weather its domestic storms. But that is a big "if." Overseas Chinese investors may feel enough affinity toward Mother China to cut it some slack, but Western investors will not. Just as China has been able to turn Western technology against the West, other developing regions will turn the Sino-globalist model against the PRC.

The good news for China's power elite is that the country's rural crisis, which has been the mainspring of its comparative advantage, will be there for the foreseeable future to safeguard low wages and protect against capital flight. The bad news is that the basic elements of the Chinese development model are already taking flight. They are no more country-specific than Fordism was for Americans. The difference is that Fordism soon bonded with democratic politics to produce the New Deal and the liberal model of "free world" development, whereas Sino-globalism can only produce a socioeconomic race to the bottom. Wherever it reaches, the China model will spell the end of democratic development, streamlining capitalism by stripping it of its liberal baggage. Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis is thus turned on its head. Joshua Kurlantzick stresses how China's increasingly proactive foreign policy, combined with this seemingly unbeatable growth model, suggests to authoritarian regimes from Vietnam to Cuba that they have no reason to budge in the face of democratic reform pressure (Kurlantzick, 2007).

Ironically, the China model could never have thrived without assistance from Washington on a scale reminiscent of the Marshall Plan. It is time for Americans to make up their minds as to what kind of

China policy they want. The choice is not between containment or engagement, but rather what kind of engagement, corporate or democratic? The myth that these are one and the same has too long voided the Senian question. Facing that question would be a moral imperative even if it concerned only China, but now the entire global South confronts the Senian choice of development with or without democratic input. The TNC establishment would have us believe that the only choice is between stagnation and a corporate dominated growth that ensures union-free factories and subsistence wages.

In fact, even in terms of economic efficiency, Sino-globalization would be a loser in any fair contest of development models. Its social and ecological unsustainability will finally catch up with it, and its draconian tactics could also backfire politically. That is what happened when Mali's military dictator imitated Tiananmen, killing hundreds of protesters in March 1991. This copy-cat crime spawned one of Africa's most promising democratic transitions (Pringle, 2006). One reason there was no such political rebound in China after Tiananmen is that the Washington Consensus, cheered on by Henry Kissinger, came to the aid of the Beijing Consensus. This (at least until the 2003 invasion of Iraq) could be the greatest blunder of recent American foreign policy.

It is odd that Sen, in setting forth his dichotomy between development with or without freedom, neglects to mention that freedom has its worst enemy in the geocorporatism that propels Washington-based globalization and abets Sino-globalization. There is no place for substantive democracy where politics is scripted by either of these capitalist models. It is a question of which subsumes which. If the American public cannot get its democratic priorities straight, taking back the political sphere from K Street lobbyists, the China model will continue to enjoy the full faith and confidence of US power brokers. That alone, however, may not guarantee Beijing's global paramountcy, for there are too many developing countries waiting in line to turn the China model against China. It is this model, rather than Chinese militarism, that poses the greatest threat to democratic development in coming decades.

INDIA AND THE SENIAN MOMENT

Sino-globalization is simply the latest and most virulent strain of the prevailing Asian growth model. Sen's *Development as Freedom* (1999: 15) is a frontal assault on the Singapore-school tenet that unyielding

political constraint is necessary for Asian economic growth. The region's power elites have long dismissed liberal concerns such as human rights and environmental protection as luxuries to be deferred until *after* development reaches a point they deem adequate. That point is of course forever postponed. The 1997 Asian Crash put this delaying tactic under suspicion even among hardline technocrats who felt no intrinsic affection for democracy. The long-term efficacy of authoritarianism could no longer be taken for granted.

This was the Senian moment, the start of a paradigm shift that sent Western capitalists rushing to construct a fire wall between their own ("liberal") and Eastern ("crony") capitalism. That orientalist gambit lost its fire power, however, in the wake of the Enron scandal and a multitude of similar revelations concerning *Western* cronyism (See Mydans, 2003). This paved the way for a full anti-globalist critique, equally applicable to the East and West. Although Sen has denied his place in the pantheon of anti-globalism, he has contributed as much as anyone to the movement's intellectual foundations. His refusal to endorse the cause marks the point where Senism takes leave of Sen's own politics.

The same "resistance to resistance" can be seen in his long neglect of environmentalism (Kapur, 1999: 284). There is a deep affinity between Senism and the eco-egalitarianism of Arundhati Roy, or even the more radical Vandana Shiva. Sen of all people should not have missed the complementarity of environmentalism and democratization, which African activists such as Ken Saro-Wiwa and Wangari Maathai have dramatically demonstrated — the price, in Saro-Wiwa's case, was his Shell-condoned execution ("Ken Saro Wiwa," 1995). Only after Suharto's ouster did ordinary Indonesians start to learn the details about the ecological pillage of the New Order (if only because Suharto's successors wanted to soften their own image by sullying his). Clearly environmental consciousness requires democratic openness, and it is doubtful that democracy can be sustained in an ecological disaster zone.

While opening the door for revisionist Asian values, the Crash also invited the revival of an earlier Asian modernism. It is often forgotten that the "Asian model" of the 1960s and early 1970s found room for equity along with growth (Donnelly, 1989: 307). This accords with the thrust of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting of 1972, which endorsed balanced growth as well as the reduction of inequality as prime developmental concerns. That egalitarian factor would be aborted by Singapore-school Asianism and neoliberalism alike. No

wonder the two got along so well for so long. For all its trauma, the Crash had the salutary effect of putting equality and other progressive concerns back on the developmental map.

Being universal in nature, these concerns run against the grain of Asian exceptionalism. We should bear in mind that before the Asian "miracle" many Latin American and African countries had been on an economic par with future Asian dragons. South Korea and Ghana, for example, had been at roughly the same level of development in the early 1960s (Huntington, 2000: xiii). The subsequent Asian "miracle," however, explained itself in sui generis terms that not only discredited "dependency" theory but camouflaged the enormous economic advantage that accrued from America's geopolitical commitment to the Rim.

Faith in global capitalism had flagged during the stagflated 1970s, and Latin America's "lost decade" of the 1980s dealt it another blow. With the whole world system on trial, the East Asian contrast was more than welcome in the West. So long as the Cold War lasted, Western capitalists were inclined to tolerate and even applaud "Asian values" (W.H. Thornton, 2002: 12). The official lesson in the Asian/Latin American contrast was that capitalism could fail only when infected by Left policies. Asian governments might radically depart from the precepts of liberal capitalism, but all was considered well on the Eastern front so long as the Asian tigers were solidly on the Right. Ironically their quasi-exceptional success story revived confidence in capitalism as the universal path to development.

Nonetheless there was a problem connecting the global to the local, as Eastern and Western capitalism were in many ways incommensurable. It was the task of Western-trained technocrats to close this gap. In Indonesia they worked closely with the Army to anchor Suharto's New Order and hence to repress democracy, though they called the process anti-communism (Anwar, 1994: 279). Here and in most Rim NICs, Singapore's soft authoritarianism — which was only soft for those who submitted to its dictates (See Poh, 1998: 245)[3] — became the salient model of development. It is now largely forgotten that in the late 1950s and early 1960s Singapore had been remarkably open and democratic (Khong, 1995: 109). By smothering this tradition, Lee Kuan Yew's cohorts gave Singapore its image as a stable

[3] Real resistance was never easy in Singapore. An old joke was that communists in Malaysia could hide in the jungle, but in Singapore they could only take cover in the Botanic Gardens.

commercial hub (See Saywell, 2000),[4] the jewel in the crown of Asian globalization.

Current globalist theory, by contrast, has sidestepped democracy in favor of the "free market" as the alpha and omega of development (Scholte, 2001: 14). The Crash brought Asia to a fateful crossroads between these two priorities — the market vs. democracy. Sen's development-as-freedom model is essentially a map of the road not taken. Once economism is accepted as the prime mover of all development, it is a short step to the acceptance of political repression as a price worth paying for economic progress. China's renewed hardline is the harbinger of a developmental paradigm shift whereby globalization has exactly the opposite effect of what Huntington and Fukuyama predicted in the late 1980s. Massive infusions of global capital are putting some of the worst regimes in Asia out of reach of domestic reform. Thus globalization turns out to be a rescue operation for endangered authoritarians. Deng Xiaoping's genius was to see that potential early enough to save the most dreadful and decrepit Asianism of them all: the Chinese Communist Party, to which he gave new life by way of capitalistic resuscitation.

Two of the most central claims of neoliberal globalism are hereby exploded: the notion that globalization is fundamentally pro-democratic and anti-nationalistic. By no means is China the only locus of this dark truth. The "black-van" side of Japanese political culture is the LDP's ever-present shadow, and most Asian governments have their equivalent of Yakuza (Japanese mafia) politics. Both major parties in Taiwan accuse each other of such ties, and both are telling the truth. If Senism is the sunny side of Asia's internal politics, this is its sinister side, and it hardly needs to be said which of the two is closer to the halls of power.

The brazen oppression of Asia's newly globalized regimes is startling even to seasoned realists. Neoglobalists such as Thaksin and Hu Jintao have not simply recycled the old Asian statism. Pre-Crash miracle-mania went far toward reducing development to economic growth, which in turn was used to justify political stagnation (Pitsuwan, 2002: 26). Yet through it all a rule-of-law veneer was usually applied, if only to placate Western allies. Now, under the tutelage of Sino-

[4] Sometimes they went too far even for their own good. The result was such a dearth of interest in politics among Singaporean youth that it became hard to recruit fresh talent for the People's Action Party (PAP). Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong was forced to raise salaries to attract even marginally qualified government functionaries.

globalization, nothing matters except the economic bottom line, which doubles as the official party line.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A SENISM OF THE LEFT

The Crash led many to demand more and better politics (See Hicken, 2004: 24), but no ASEAN country was willing to forfeit even a fraction of its GDP growth for non-material goals. If Rim governments could not deliver a full and speedy economic recovery, the public would soon give up on the democratic side of reform. The departures of Suharto and Mahathir left a regional leadership vacuum that any human rights or democratic activist would have to welcome. But a prolonged economic slump invited a reversion to old voting habits, or worse.

Washington had good reason for keeping its silence concerning the reactionary tilt of globalized regimes such as India's BJP and Thailand's TRT. Right populists, after all, were considered more pliable than Left ones. Thaksin became the archetype of "glocal" (global/local) authoritarianism. The paramount fact from Washington's perspective was that capitalism was safe on his watch. Propelled by a resurgent economy, in growth terms second only to China, Thailand's corporate poster boy was instantly recognized by global power brokers as a formidable agent of de-radicalization.

The White House took Thaksin and Vajpayee as members in good standing on the "us" side of Bush II's us/them global divide. Like Bush they voided the pluralist meaning of democracy while milking its populist appeal. Thai democracy was welcomed precisely because it was a sham. Real democracy was dangerously unpredictable. Over the last quarter century the bond between Thai politicians and criminal gangs had tightened, while vote-buying became so rampant that many voters saw it as a legal entitlement (Ockey, 2000: 85-86). If this is the best that Asian democracy can offer, authoritarianism will win by default. At least it makes the trains run on time, and keeps the unions in line, or in China's case nonexistent.

The Crash, in sum, brought development theory to a stark crossroads: either democratization would have to be upgraded to a first priority issue, on a par with economic growth, or downgraded in the manner of Hindutva, Singaporean Asianism, Thaksinomics, or Sino-globalism. Thailand epitomized the "glocal" turning of the tide so far as reform is concerned. Thai "democracy" had long operated in a gray zone of decentralized patronage, whereby public office was a purchasable

commodity and effective leadership was all but impossible. It turned out that most Thais did not much care, so long as the economy stayed on track; and it soon became apparent that Thaksinocracy was part of a pan-Asian trend.

This second phase of post-Crash politics is comparable to Japan's "reverse course" of the late 1940s, which likewise had Washington's tacit blessing. Both paved the way for a rearguard acceptance of growth at all costs. The 2006 coup that ousted Thaksin had less to do with moral revulsion at his corruption than with the fact that he did not push the new Asian developmentalism far enough. Like an Asian Juan Per?n, he diverted too much revenue to the purchase of rural and working class support. Urban entrepreneurs wanted a less compromised economism of the Right. The bland acceptance by ASEAN neighbors first of "democratic" Thaksinocracy and then of a patently anti-democratic post-Thaksinocracy says much about the drift of Asian globalization, but the crowning touch is ASEAN's extension of membership to the brutal Burmese junta.

Is anything left, then, of the Crash-inspired reformation? However briefly, the Crash awakened the Rim from its political lethargy, making it harder for globalists to dodge the issue of political reform by way of a presumed democratic teleology. If the liberal democratic road to development was to be taken at all, it would have to be taken more assertively. Reform was in the air, but more would be needed than the minimal device of elections and ballots. It is little wonder that Sen's "democracy as freedom" thesis earned him global credibility and a Nobel Prize at this time, for *pro forma* democracy had patently flunked the test in Asia. Even some classic modernists now wavered in their belief that economic growth is the last word on development. It was time, they thought, to give substantive democracy a chance.

Senism was no longer a fringe model, but would it be anything more than a passing fad? To be sure, Sen's democratic axiom cuts both ways: if economic growth is not sustainable without political development, so too democratization is unsustainable without a solid and well distributed economic foundation. Sen may be at heart an egalitarian — as his praise of Kerala, India's most socialistic state, amply proves — but he is still a mainstream economist. If democracy is one engine of his development model, its twin engine is still economic growth. Having almost sputtered out in the post-Marcos Philippines, that second engine went entirely dead in Indonesia after the Crash, leading in both cases to a lack of Senian concurrence.

Likewise, Thailand's democratic reformism died of economic inertia, giving rise to Thaksinocracy. The irony is that the Crash at once activated and deactivated this political reformation. The economic downturn that spawned democracy could also kill it. Just as it had in postwar Japan, US foreign policy played the role of axman. America's distrust of grassroots democratization was never more fully exposed. What US-led globalization has fostered is the kind of procedural democracy that can be bought and sold, Thai-style. And since the highest "democratic" bidder is sure to be the most globally connected one, it is not hard to see how neocolonial globalism operates, turning the very word "reform" into a geocorporate wish list.

Clearly Sen has overrated the formal apparatus of democracy as a guarantor of real and sustainable development. Dictators have less to fear from universal suffrage than from the social and cultural resistance that globalization voids. This takes us into the thick of the new Asian drama, where incommensurable Asianisms are facing off in a climactic developmental value war. The Left-Senian model we adumbrate is fighting on two fronts: with neoliberal globalization on the one hand and Asian authoritarianism on the other, though increasingly the two work in tandem.

Despite their profound contextual differences, Thai globalism and Sino-globalism are alike in their anti-Senism. Both are globalized nationalisms with an abiding commitment to development without Senian attributes. The question is how far the rest of Asia and the whole developing world will follow them. India may be the crucial "swing state," as C. Raja Mohan (2006: 24-25) calls it, but at present it is clearly swinging in China's direction. The difference between Indo- and Sino-globalism will blur over time unless India can reclaim the twin pillars of its distinctly Asian democracy: its Gandhian commitment to the underprivileged masses and its Nehruvian determination to preserve nonaligned independence (See Thornton and Thornton, 2006). Current globalization nullifies the former and seriously weakens the latter.

It hardly needs to be said which side of the Asian values debate gets the support of the IMF, the World Bank, and WTO. This conflict will be familiar to those who remember the political schism within Western countries during and after the Great Depression, as depicted by Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation* (1944). Our sense of déjà vu is no accident, for the Asian Crisis — which in fact has never ended, but in many respects is expanding beyond the Rim to all of Asia — is the

Asian equivalent of the Depression so far as the working classes are concerned. Once again the issue is more political than economic, for the real problem is not so much underdevelopment (where the solution could be economic growth alone) as politically guided maldevelopment (requiring social democratic rather than neoliberal restructuring).

For several decades "Asian values" have been defined by a power elite that would seem never to have heard of social or ecological accounting, much less accountability. If the "other Asia" that Senism addresses was never a prominent feature on the Cold War map, globalization is making it all the more obscure. What is needed is a new political cartography. Simply to have "democracy" or not is beside the point. It is easy to set up a pro forma "democracy" that keeps socially significant choices off the ballot.

The post-Senism we advance takes democracy to the anti-globalist barricades, which may be the only place where an effective "vote" can be cast. Under the throes of current globalization, democracy has two basic choices: to be oppositional or to be cosmetic. The latter serves the interests of present power structures, while the former moves Senism to the Left. It is unfortunate that today's ossified Left still sidelines democracy as a first priority issue. This allows the Right to seize the moral high ground of freedom, which in its hands amounts to economic serfdom. Having egregiously ignored the democratic movements in Eastern Europe that precipitated the fall of the Soviet empire (See Codrescu, 2007), the Left now equally ignores the democratic and human rights imperative in China and much of Asia.

It is hoped that this study can encourage a chiasmatic exchange between Senism and the Left, with the latter taking a Senian turn and the former a Left turn, even without Sen's approval. Let us close, though, on a point of total agreement with Sen: the recognition that simple economic growth is not development, and certainly it is not Asian development. To freeze development in this reactionary mode (which by the way was imported from the West) would spell the end of the democratic hopes that the Crash engendered. This would kill the impending Asian Renaissance in every non-material sense, and finally in the material sense as well.

Perhaps the worst case scenario at this point is the possibility that Asians, for lack of an effective political map, will not even know they are approaching an epic developmental crossroads. They could pass right through it without realizing that once upon a time they had a choice. Senism holds up a warning sign that there is grave danger

ahead, and in this respect Asian development is no exception. The whole global South is fast approaching this same crossroads of development with or without freedom. Rhetoric aside, the Washington Consensus leads to much the same illiberal destination that the Beijing Consensus does. What is needed, we argue, is a real Third Way, which is to say a Senism of the Left.

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